

"Louisiana Purchase" & Other Kickbacks Would Get Axed

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Saying the American people are outraged over the "sweet-heart deals" added to the health care bill, U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan (FL-13) announced today he will introduce legislation repealing the so-called Louisiana Purchase and other unseemly spending attached to the legislation.

Buchanan's bill would not affect the content of the overall health care bill, but would target the hundreds of millions in spending added to secure individual votes of several U.S. senators. His bill is similar to unsuccessful legislation offered in the U.S. Senate by Sen. John McCain.

"This 'Let's Make a Deal' mentality is offensive to the American people, and rightly so," Buchanan said. "If legislation cannot pass on its own merits but needs to be sweetened with taxpayer boondoggles costing hundreds of millions of dollars then something is grossly wrong with the process."

Buchanan, the author of the "Sunshine Resolution" that required health care talks to be held in public, said if Congress had adopted his legislation these sweet-heart deals could have been avoided. "When members of Congress think they can sneak something into a bill in the dead of night they are more likely to attempt such abuses," Buchanan said. "Sunshine is the best disinfectant."

Even President Obama's top advisor, David Axelrod, said the president does not believe state-only carve-outs should be in the bill. "I hope the President will follow through on this statement and support my legislation," Buchanan said.

The Louisiana Purchase designated \$300 million in Medicaid funds to Louisiana in an apparent attempt to secure the vote of Sen. Mary Landrieu. It was inserted shortly before the Senate voted on the measure, and Landrieu supported the bill.

The bill repeals the following "sweetheart deals" included in the health care law and the reconciliation bill:

- Additional Medicaid funding for Hawaii hospitals;
- Almost \$100 million in additional Medicaid funding for Tennessee hospitals;
- The "Louisiana Purchase" providing \$300 million in special Medicaid funding for Louisiana;
- Special Medicare funding primarily for hospitals in Michigan and Connecticut;
- The "U-CON" proposal that provides \$100 million for a Connecticut hospital;
- The Frontier Funding provision providing new Medicare money for Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming; and
- The provision allowing for certain residents in Libby, Montana to participate in Medicare